H. R. FREEBORN, Gentlemen's Hosier, Glover, and Complete Outfitter,
TO ALL PARTS of the WORLD.—COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS, Cross St., and 2, VICTORIA ST. (late of the Arcade.)

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HAMPSON'S PHARMACY, 63, PICCADILLY.
BEATT BROTHERS.

Vol. IV.—No. 126. MANCHESTER, Saturday, JANUARY 7th. Price One Penny.

TEA,
THIS YEAR'S GROWTH,
VIA SUEZ CANAL,
AT
J. F. MART'S
Establishments,
OPPOSITE TOWN HALL, SALFORD
110, Borough Buildings, London Road;
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62, OLDHAM ROAD, MANCHESTER.
Congou .....2s. 2s. 4d. 2s. 6d.
Fine Pekoe-flavour, 2s. 8d.
Finest Imported, rich Pekoe-flavour, 3s. & 3s. 4d.
Choicest Gatherings—Rich full-flavoured Lapsong Souchong, 4s.

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A SPLENDID ASSORTMENT of NOVELTIES and ELEGANCIES, suitable for CHRISTMAS PRESENTS, NEW YEAR'S GIFTS, &c., at prices ranging from 6d. to £25
WORKBOXES, DESKS, DRESSING CASES, MUSICAL WORKCASES, MUSICAL ALBUMS, CARD CASES, BAGS, CIGAR CASES, PEARL, IVORY, and other Articles.
ENGLISH AND FOREIGN TOYS.
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New Illustrated List sent post free.
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DAVIES'S
DAY HOTEL, AND RESTAURANT,
2, ROOK ST., YORK ST.,
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DINING, LUNCHEON, AND SMOKING ROOMS, CHOICE WINES, LONDON STOUT, AND BURTON ALES.

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W. and M. DODGE, Watchmakers, Jewellers and Silversmiths, 21, Market Place, Manchester, solicit the attention of intending Purchasers to their Extended and High-class STOCK, specially selected upon entering their New Premises.
Ten per Cent Discount from their usual plain-marked prices.

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HENRY PIDDUCK, Goldsmith,
24, ST. ANN'S SQUARE.
A Large Variety of Novelties, suitable for Presents.
Suites of Fine Gold Bracelet, Brooch, and Earrings.
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Diamond, Gem, Signet, Guard, and Wedding Rings.
Superior and Fashionable Gold Watches, warranted.
Elegant Drawing-room and Dining-room Clocks, Bronzes, &c.
A Great Variety of Silver Electro-plated Goods and Cutlery.

BRANDY.
A very general impression prevails among the people of this country that Brandy is distilled by the Merchants abroad who ship it to this country, and whose names have in the popular mind become synonymous with the words, "Cognac Brandy."
A very short explanation will show how totally without foundation this impression is. Brandy is really made by the numerous large and small proprietors of vineyards around Cognac, in the Charente Inferieure, who in the first instance make their grapes into wine and as soon as the fermentation has ceased, set to work and distil the wine, the spirit from which is the fine Brandy of Commerce. Immediately after the distillation is completed, the Brandy is purchased in large quantities by the Cognac merchants, who ship it to the various markets for which they have orders. The farmers take their Brandy to market just as farmers here do their corn, and, as a rule, vie with each other in their endeavours to get a name for quality, and each acts on his judgment in selling, some selling at once, some preferring to hold over and sell it when old, and some doing both. A great quantity of each year's produce is purchased in this country and brought over at once, and kept in bond till such time as it is wanted for use. It is a mistake the public make to suppose that because Brandy is bottled in France, and bears this name or that, it is therefore better or older than what respectable merchants sell in England. That which comes in bottle is precisely the same quality of Brandy as that which comes in cask, and, as a rule, it is sent younger and costs more, owing to extra expenses, than what regular merchants in England put up themselves, as they keep it in bond till fully matured. We advise the public to place no confidence whatever on the mere putting up of the article in bottle in France, but to BUY VALUE and NOT NAME.
We can give the very Finest
OLD COGNAC BRANDY
at
52s. PER DOZEN,
20s. PER GALLON,
and confidently ask comparison with Case Brandy of any shipper at 60s. to 72s. per dozen.
For Cooking and Preserving purposes we can give a pure young French Brandy at
36s. PER DOZEN,
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W. BATTY, Watch Manufacturer, Goldsmith, Silversmith, &c., 9, Market Street, offers a *bona fide* DISCOUNT of TEN PER CENT on all Cash purchases during the season. A constant succession of new designs.

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The EXTENSIVE ALTERATIONS being now COMPLETE,
THE STAR CLOTHING
ESTABLISHMENT,
No. 87, OLDHAM STREET,
IS NOW OPEN,
With an entirely New and Extensive Stock of CHEAP and FASHIONABLE MEN'S and BOYS' CLOTHING.
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HENRY JACOBS, Proprietor.

MAGIC LANTERNS and SLIDES,
of Every Description,
FOR SALE OR ON HIRE,
Including all This Season's Novelties. Catalogues, post free, 2d.
THOMAS ARMSTRONG and BROTHER,
Opticians and Spectacle Manufacturers to the Royal Eye Hospital,
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DOWNS' CUT GLASS and CHINA
WAREHOUSE, 13 & 15, SMITHY DOOR, AND VICTORIA MARKET.
We are Now Submitting our CHRISTMAS STOCK of DINNER, DESSERT, TEA, AND TOILET SERVICES.
The most Modern Shapes and Newest Patterns.
CUT GLASS DECANTERS, WINES, &c.,
In Elegant Design and in Every Variety, for all Purchasers.
To Parties Furnishing, this Large Stock is admirably suited to Select from, combining Lowest Prices and Superior Quality.
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REAL SABLE MUFFS, ONE GUINEA.

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A Large Assortment of Fashionable FUR TRIMMINGS in Sets, for Mantles and Jackets.

FUR CARRIAGE RUGS, IN GREAT VARIETY.

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WINE AND SPIRIT MERCHANT,
103, STOCKPORT ROAD (Opposite Shakespere-street), having recently commenced business on his own account, respectfully solicits the support of his neighbourhood. For many years connected with a leading family house in the county, of over one hundred years' standing, and **buying everything direct from the producer**, he is in a position to enter into an honourable competition with the leading houses in town.

If, therefore, the neighbouring gentry would kindly favour him with one trial, he trusts they will never have occasion to regret the encouragement thus given to a young beginner.

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Finest Imported Marsala.....20s. per doz.
Dinner Wine, guaranteed a pure Sherry ..30s. per doz.
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The best and safest remedy for coughs; relieves the difficulty of breathing in Asthma. To be had from most respectable chemists and confectioners, in 3d. and 6d. boxes; or, direct from he depot.—HETHERINGTON, wholesale confectioner, 18, Lower Mosley Street, Manchester.—7lb. parcels carriage paid o any part of the kingdom.

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ROYAL CAMBRIDGE SAUSAGE HOUSE,
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Nearly opposite, and to the right of the Prince's Theatre.

SAUSAGE AND MASHED POTATOES
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ALWAYS READY.
Served in the London style, and in half a minute from the time of ordering.
Allsopp's Mild and Bitter Ales, Combe and Co's London Stout. Wines, Cigars, Tea, Coffee, &c.

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for the Relief of the
PEASANTRY and other NON-COMBATANT SUFFERERS in the districts of France and Germany ravaged by the War.
Thousands of our FELLOW-CREATURES IN NORTH-EASTERN FRANCE, MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN,
are now
STARVING FROM COLD AND HUNGER,
Being houseless, without fuel, and only half-clad.
There are now more than twelve unpaid agents actively engaged in the distribution of this fund in these distressed districts, and it is that their efforts may continue to be exerted that we appeal to our fellow-citizens for largely-extended support.
Total amount of Subscriptions reported to the Central Committee in London, £20,000.
Received by the Manchester Committee, £1,080.
Manchester Committee.
Charles Thompson, J.P.
John King, Alderman.
James Hodgkinson, Monton Grange, near Eccles.
Josiah Merrick, Whalley Range.
Henry Thorp, Chatham Mills, Lower Ormond Street.
Thomas B. King, Chepstow Street, Oxford Street,
Walter Morris, 68, Fountain Street.
Alfred Simpson, 49, Major Street.
John B. Edmondson, Knowsley Street, Cheetham.
George Rooke, Moorside, Sale.
Godfrey Woodhead, 28, Victoria Street.
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Subscriptions will be received by the Secretaries; any of the Committee; or at the King Street Branch of the District Bank. Contributions of new clothing or goods in the piece may be sent to 51, Piccadilly.

ROYAL POMONA GARDENS.
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EVERY MONDAY, WEDNESDAY, AND SATURDAY
Admission, Sixpence each.
NEW ICE FOR SKATING EVERY MORNING.
DURING THE FROST.

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WELLS' DEPILATORY is the only *effectual* remedy for the immediate and permanent removal of superfluous hair from the face, arms, neck, &c. This preparation effects its purpose almost instantaneously, without pain or injury to the most sensitive skin. Full particulars on receipt of a stamped directed envelope. JOHN WELLS, 113, Euston-street, near Hampstead-road, London. N.B.—Hundreds of testimonials have been received from the nobility and ladies of rank who have tried this marvellous remedy.

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HOLLOWAY'S PILLS
AND OINTMENT.
During piercing winds and excessive variations of temperature every one is more or less liable to internal and external disease. Throat, chest, liver, bowels, kidneys, and skin all suffer in some degree, but may be relieved by rubbing in this Ointment, aided by proper doses of the Pills, for administering which full directions accompany each box; in truth, any one who thoroughly masters Holloway's "instructions" will, in remedying disease, exchange the labour of an hour for the profit of a lifetime. All bronchial, pulmonary, and throat disorders require that the Ointment should be thoroughly well rubbed upon the skin twice a-day with considerable briskness, and great persistence and regularity.

BROWN'S COTTON GLANCE.—The above Circular is published every Monday, and may be had of the Author at a charge of Two-and-a-Half Guineas per annum, payable half-yearly in advance W. L. BROWN,
27, Fitzclarence Street, Liverpool.

ESTABLISHED, 1847.

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FUR, SEAL, and ASTRACAN JACKETS, Fur Trimmings, Fur Hearth and Carriage Rugs, Buffalo Robes, &c.

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Annual Income, nearly £400,000. Amounts received at five per cent interest.
Amounts not exceeding £50 repaid upon demand.
Advances promptly made upon Freehold and Leasehold securities.
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Just published, price One Shilling,
HOME TRADE CUTTING; its Causes and Effects: a Review together with the whole of the Letters bearing upon the topic which appeared in the *Manchester Courier*.
Manchester; THOS. SOWLER & SONS, and all Booksellers.

MUSIC
FOR CHRISTMAS PRESENTS
AND NEW YEAR'S GIFTS.
H. WATSON & CO.,
25, MARKET PLACE (near the Royal Exchange), MANCHESTER.

WE ARE NOW
SELLING THE NEW SEASON'S TEA
At our TEA ESTABLISHMENTS, at the
Corner of OLDHAM STREET and SWAN STREET, and at
53, PICCADILLY, MANCHESTER,
AS UNDER:—
Our Tea at 2s. per lb. is giving great satisfaction.
The Tea at half-a-crown is quite a favourite.
The Popular Tea for heavy consumption is the one at 3s.
Those Teas at 3s. 4d. and 3s. 6d. are very fine flavoured.
Our Best Black Tea at 4s. is especially selected for our trade.
WM. SATTERTHWAITE, TEA MERCHANT.

THE GREAT ANNUAL SALE

AT BRITANNIA HOUSE,

RICHARD BATEMAN'S,

18 AND 20, OLDHAM STREET,

AND

DALE STREET, MANCHESTER,

WHICH IS NOW TAKING PLACE.

Public attention is respectfully directed to this important ANNUAL SALE, and to the advantages it offers.

We have much pleasure in announcing that we have recently opened a Department for Household Linens and General Drapery jointly with the Fancy Trade, and we especially desire to attract notice to this new feature in our business, as the Stock, in addition to all the standard makes, contains numerous

LOTS OF DOMESTIC DRAPERY AT REMARKABLE PRICES.

The Managers of our several Departments have been for some time past actively engaged in the endeavour to purchase for this SALE

FIRST-CLASS GOODS UNDER VALUE,

and owing to the continuance of the war and other causes they have been most successful.

We would here refer to the fact that the utmost efforts have ever been used to place before our patrons the

BEST PRODUCTS OF BRITISH AND FOREIGN MANUFACTURE,

and that articles of an inferior quality never form part of the Stock at Britannia House.

Rich Silks, Shawls, Mantles, Millinery, Bonnets, Hats, Trimmed Robes, Costumes, Fancy Dresses, Furs, Household Linens, and General Drapery, &c., &c.

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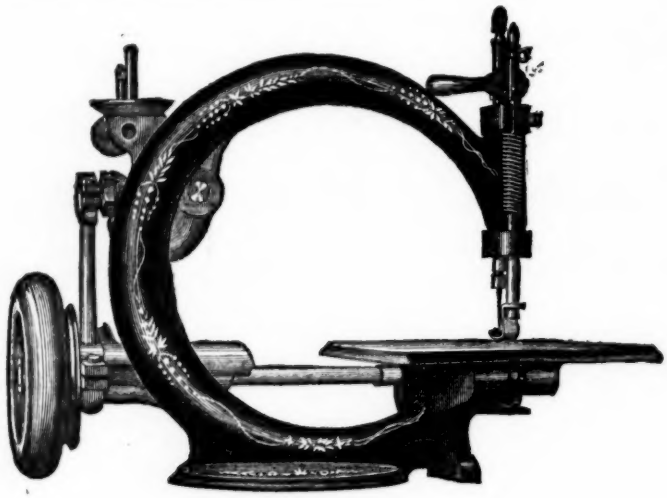
MRS. WHITAKER, PROPRIETRESS. MRS. MONDAY, MANAGERESS.



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SEWING MACHINE

HAS BEEN

REDUCED TO

£6. 6s.

16, CROSS ST., MANCHESTER.

G. R. ALLINSON, General Manchester Warehouse) Families Supplied. Any length cut from the Piece at Wholesale Prices. (54 and 54a, HIGH STREET, and 13, CHURCH STREET

THE SPHINX:

A JOURNAL OF LITERATURE, CRITICISM, AND HUMOUR.

IN MEMORIAM.

GEORGE WILSON.

IT was in the summer of 1841, about Waterloo-day, that I was taken into King Street, in this city, to hear election speeches delivered by Mark Philips and Milner Gibson, who were then fighting Sir George Murray and Mr. Entwisle for the representation of Manchester. To a boy of fifteen, fresh from the country, the appearance of these political magnates was a real excitement, and I listened with eager interest whilst the kind friend who was my mentor pointed out to me the chief personages who orated from the office-window, which still exists opposite the present Savings Bank in King Street. Some of those personages have long since passed away. Sir Thomas Potter, Mr. Kershaw (the member for Stockport), Mr. John Brooks, whose homely wit had for me an especial attraction, and others who need not be mentioned, have long slept the sleep which knows no waking; and on Wednesday last we—some of us—stood by the grave of another figure which, thirty years ago, was conspicuous at the Liberal committee-room window on that bright midsummer day.

To men of middle age who have taken any part, active or passive, in the politics of the last generation, more particularly on the Liberal side, there was no politician so well-known publicly as the late George Wilson. There were giants in those days, and sometimes they all gathered together under the leadership of Wilson; but whether they were grouped, or isolated, or in detachments, whoever was absent, George Wilson never was. The group might be varied, but the central figure was invariable. The strong head with the curly hair and a conformation of featute very suggestive of a hawk, something like that of the late Lord Derby, were capital frontispieces for such a position. This man was clearly born for it. He was the monarch of the scene; he knew well the instruments around him; and when he had made his own speech the skilfulness with which he ordained the discharge of the other guns was a study which I fear we shall never contemplate any more. The scenes themselves, as I remember them, seem indeed already like the pageants of a dream. I turn over the pages sometimes of the old *Examiner* and look at the records of those days, and fancy I hear the hum of the thousands who then waited for the big ones, tier above tier on the platform, and a seething multitude below. It is like putting one's ear to a sea shell and fancying the billow roar beating up from distant seas. The stern hawk-like face, so uncompromising, so full of fight, which seemed to say "Behold I have put on this armour and never shall it be doffed until the bread of this people be free,"—gazed forth on the eager multitude, and then came the strong and vigorous speech. There were no ornaments, no flowers of oratory, but fact on fact, Pelion on Ossa piled. The soul of the man was in his work; a big earnest soul pulsed through all his speech. He shook the evil system of Protection until its bones rattled and cracked again, and he left it fractured all over. A most skilful manipulator of statistics he sent them out as from a mitrailleuse, and the audience roared as the gaping holes were made in the phalanx which was being attacked.

There was a certain cruel hardness in the tone of Mr. Wilson's speeches which, to those who did not know him personally, would appear symptomatic of a hard and cruel nature and a personal vindictiveness against his opponents which were altogether foreign to his nature. All his vehemence was that of a politician, never that of an individual. He hated injustice and oppression with a perfect hatred, but always with a breadth which left the individual but a minim in his eyes. Personally, he was the most urbane and the kindest of men, and those amiable traits of his character were well known and universally recognised by the fiercest of his public antagonists. He went through that colossal agitation, from first to last, without one personal altercation. Whoever else might be snappish, he never was. The light and gleam of political faith which shone in his eyes when he ruled the monster meetings of the League gave place to the merry twinkle of familiar friendly talk the moment the platform was left behind. He rejoiced in and was proud of his position, as he well might be; but no word of self-glorification ever escaped his lips. His manly, honest face beamed all over with delight after a meeting, when the clear exposition of Cobden or the Thor hammer of John Bright had sent out their sound over all lands. Then a cigar with the jubilant George, just to soothe the overwrought nerves, and a long chat prolonged into the small hours were treats indeed. Is there no chronicler filled with knowledge of those days, and of the men that made them memorable, who will arise and tell us all about them as they deserve?

George Wilson's tastes were so unaffectedly simple that the modern ways of men aspiring to a public career were not his at all. He detested the Miss Nancyism of politics pampered by social luxuries and white chokers, and it was indeed charged against him in the memorable contest of 1857 that his predilections in this regard had alienated many friends from his side. The increase of wealth in Lancashire and the neighbouring counties had induced many folks to rely a good deal more upon their butlers than upon their brains for political influence, and all organizations which did not include dinner parties and indigestible entreés were not considered the thing. The question of questions was Who does a man dine with? What sort of material expands his waistcoat rather than his hat? Manufacturers by power came out bedizened like bulls at a Grecian festival, and manufacturesses by power insisted upon being admitted into the mysteries thereof, and tightened their ample girdles about their waists until they squinted with pain and uncertainty and fashion. A great lump of weakly opinion broke off from the simple rule of Wilson, and fled gibbering into marble

halls and fools' paradises. This was a most painful experience for Wilson, and he groaned over it with a real sorrow. I fear this fatal mischief has since extended over a wider area, and that its development is still unhappily manifest all through these once robust districts. It is most lamentable, for many reasons which I cannot specify here. Wilson himself never once gave way to any nonsense of the kind. Although he knew intimately the best men in England, whose houses were always open to him, yet he never permitted himself one sacrifice at the shrine of mere ostentation. He lived to do good in the way his conscience pointed out to him, and in the furtherance of this mission he lived his life. His heart was always open to a tale of sorrow. It opened at the first note thereof, and his purse in unusual unison opened at the same time. He could not help giving; and if the hallowed maxim be true that it is more blessed to give than to receive, most assuredly that blessing must have descended in ample measure upon him whose loss we now deplore.

I would that we could promise ourselves a succession of public men like Wilson, and those of whose magnificent achievements in our day he was the director. In that especial department of political life, it would almost seem as if the old proverb about the fish in the sea replacing those which are out were breaking down. The old chieftains are *not* being replaced. A few of them still stalk amongst us, but year by year the stately column is thinned and the mighty helm and plume of days gone by no longer tower aloft in the strife. The phalanx which George Wilson enlisted and commanded was unlike all others. It rested upon no watchword of mere party; it swore neither by Orange, nor Jacobite, nor Hanoverian; it was not overlapped with the ribbons either of Pitt or of Fox; it sought to be free and it was free; it brought to the consideration of all public questions a perfectly independent judgment. Neither Court nor aristocracy, nor the traditions of the Fourth Estate, nor of the literature of the hour had any conventional terrors for it. They all were pitched into the triple-heated crucible of matter-of-fact and common sense, and in what shape they might emerge was their look out. George Wilson always kept in view the stern fact that we have all to live our lives, and that this would have to be done whether the Kirk and State had gang'd the gait indicated in the verse of Burns, or turned in the reverse direction. To husband for use at the right time all the resources of the individual, mental, moral, and physical was his simple political faith. His religious faith was expressed in a life of constant labour for others and constant abnegation of self.

THE ROMANCE OF THE WAR.

THE war now raging in France is especially fruitful in surprises. The ancient, the mediæval, and the modern are blended amongst the resources of both sides, in a manner quite startling to the reflective mind. Omitting any reference to the surprises of Saarbruck, Weissembourg, Wörth, and Sedan, some incidents arising from the investment of Paris are very curious. Paris invested, means the cutting off of all ordinary means of communication between that city and the world outside the line of the besieging army. The resources of the besieged in trying to communicate with the outer world, and of the besiegers in trying to prevent such communications, are very interesting to the onlookers. The practice of ballooning was never carried on with such serious intent, and with such momentous issues at stake, as those with which it is now almost daily used from Paris; and the spectacle of M. Gambetta escaping by that means from the capital, affords the first instance in history of a statesman going up in a ballon for the good of his country! The balloons from Paris are the means of conveying pigeons from the city, whose duty is to bring back from the outside messages to the capital. The pigeon is the oldest messenger on record, as it was sent out by Noah from the Ark, to bring word as to the state of the earth during the subsistence of the great flood. The recorded history of perhaps every nation mentions the use of pigeons as messengers. But to-day one of the youngest of modern inventions, that of microscopic photography, is used as the means of conveying news by the oldest of messengers. Each pigeon entering Paris carries on the middle feather of its tail, in a space of one inch and a half in length, by about three-sixteenths of an inch in diameter, the enormous number of three thousand five hundred messages, of twenty words each, or the grand total of seventy thousand words! The Germans, to intercept this communication by the most ancient messenger, and the most modern means of minute writing, bring in a mediæval sport—that of hawking. Lately an ingenious Frenchman has invented and patented an entirely new means of communication, by which the conveyance of letters, sealed as written, is undertaken for the small charge of one franc per letter—a saving of seven hundred per cent on the cost of the pigeon-post. The means by which this is undertaken is not made public, lest German ingenuity should find a means of stopping it.

Another remarkable development of the necessities of the Parisians is now to be seen daily in the second advertising column of the *Times* newspaper. For several days that column and part of the third have been full of advertisements, in French, conveying news from the emigrés in England and America, and from friends dispersed over the continent, to some of the beleaguered citizens of Paris. The fact that messages from such places as Boulogne, Havre, Pau, Grenoble, Bordeaux, Lausanne, Brussels, and the Hague, are put into the *Times* seems to point to the conclusion, that the Thunderer regularly reaches Paris. The nature of the news thus conveyed to Paris is very various—births, deaths, sickness, recovery, financial and shipping information, addresses of escaped wives, children, or parents, and assurances of good health, good wishes, and prayers of those outside the German lines, form the substance of the bulk of these advertisements. A translation of a few of these advertisements will serve our present purpose, which is only to call the attention of our readers to the strange romance to be daily found in our contemporary. We purposely omit names and addresses.

"To the Consul of England or the United States, or any kind person in Paris: Pray make known to Madame de S——, Rue ——, that all her family are well; her husband is at Frankfort, her mother at Brussels, her brother at Ardèche, her sister at home, and her sister-in-law, who has just had a little girl, at Brighton." "To Mr. F——, Rue ——, Paris: We are well; father also; are very uneasy without news from you; received your last letter of 28th Oct.; all send love, and wish you to keep your heart up; write soon." "H——, Rue——, Paris: Mother, Madame W——, and all Emile's children are in good health, and working hard; Marie A—— also; news of Evian continues excellent, as well as that of Mesdames L—— and L——; we have yours until 20th Dec; from General Bataille we learn that poor Lucien is dead, killed at Gravelotte. Pray, Mr. Ward, American ambassador, or any other person, communicate this news." "J. L——, Rue ——, Paris: Four thousand sterling received in drafts for you from New Orleans; not paid for want of your endorsement; Charwin died 17th Oct. of disease of the heart; yours of 16th Dec. received, and we carry out your orders as regards Madame M—— at once; yours of 25th Nov. received; letter of 3rd Oct. not received." "Widow L——, of Metz, died 3rd Oct. last; her daughter, Miss D—— L——, is at ——'s." "To the Marchioness G——, in the Ambulance, at the Grand Hotel: Your father, children, and husband are well; the latter still a prisoner." "To Mr. R——, Rue ——, Paris: Several letters received; the last of 19th Dec. Whoever reads these lines, pray tell him that his old mother is well, and still at Cheltenham." "Paris: Make known to A. D——, Rue ——, Jenny has six teeth, and is well." "L——, Rue ——, Paris: A second thumping lad *(gros fils)*; Marie, Ernest, Henri, and baby are well; write often."

AN OCTOGENARIAN AND SOMETHING MORE.

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"But did you think that railway travelling would'nt be as safe as the old coaches for your journeys?" we enquired. "I didn't travel by coach," he quietly rejoined. "How then? You surely didn't walk?" "Not exactly, I travelled on horseback!" "On horseback?' we echoed, astounded. "Where were your clothes, and how could you manage without patterns?" "The patterns, though numerous, were light," he answered, "and went into a small space; I kept them in my saddle-bags." "What are they," we asked. "Well, if you've never seen any, I can't very well explain them to you. They were leather-cases that slung from each side of the saddle close behind the leg of the rider. My great coat was rolled up and strapped to the pommel of the saddle, and my change of clothes and shaving tackle were in a round valise, like an old-fashioned candle-box or a dragoon's knapsack, strapped on to the saddle behind, and you may fancy me, as best you can, thus equipped and wearing a pair of high buff-leather overalls and spurs, going at a walk, or dismounted and leading my nag over bad roads and up and down steep bits, and making up lost time over level ground, at a kind of run, more than a trot, for I never rose in the stirrups, but rode with outstretched legs and loose reins, snaffle and curb. And so from one town to another, for six weeks at a stretch, through Yorkshire, down Lincolnshire, and so home again over the intervening counties, Nottingham and Derbyshire, taking every place of note and the best men in every place, their orders and cash, at all events, we'll say." "Have you always had good roads to travel over?" "In the early years of my travelling a track, little better than a bridle-path, perhaps passing through two or three streams in its course, was often the only means of communication between two places which are now large towns with competing railways between them; a gig or any wheeled conveyance would have been all but useless. I was often offered a gig by the house, but always said 'No, thank you.' I never liked them."

"How were you off for accommodation?" we asked, "did you always find quarters at command?" "I was never in any danger about that. I was very regular, and soon became known on the road for punctuality. The commercial-room system was even then an old institution, though free from many vices which afterwards crept in, and the public are in fact indebted to commercials for the creation as well as the maintenance of many a comfortable quiet inn which has since made itself a name. Returning from my six weeks' excursion, as I may call it, I spent the next three or four weeks at home, attending at the warehouse every day, preparing my patterns for next journey, seeing any of my clients, as I used to call them, who happened to be over in Manchester, and going through the customers' ledger account with the managing partner, giving my opinion as to who was 'shaky,' and who might be trusted, and to what extent; and at the end of that time I was on the road again, this time through Cheshire, Staffordshire, and so on, down southward through the apple country as far as Somerset, and even, once or twice a year, into Dorsetshire and back before a month had run out."

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halls and fools' paradises. This was a most painful experience for Wilson, and he groaned over it with a real sorrow. I fear this fatal mischief has since extended over a wider area, and that its development is still unhappily manifest all through these once robust districts. It is most lamentable, for many reasons which I cannot specify here. Wilson himself never once gave way to any nonsense of the kind. Although he knew intimately the best men in England, whose houses were always open to him, yet he never permitted himself one sacrifice at the shrine of mere ostentation. He lived to do good in the way his conscience pointed out to him, and in the furtherance of this mission he lived his life. His heart was always open to a tale of sorrow. It opened at the first note thereof, and his purse in unusual unison opened at the same time. He could not help giving; and if the hallowed maxim be true that it is more blessed to give than to receive, most assuredly that blessing must have descended in ample measure upon him whose loss we now deplore.

I would that we could promise ourselves a succession of public men like Wilson, and those of whose magnificent achievements in our day he was the director. In that especial department of political life, it would almost seem as if the old proverb about the fish in the sea replacing those which are out were breaking down. The old chieftains are *not* being replaced. A few of them still stalk amongst us, but year by year the stately column is thinned and the mighty helm and plume of days gone by no longer tower aloft in the strife. The phalanx which George Wilson enlisted and commanded was unlike all others. It rested upon no watchword of mere party; it swore neither by Orange, nor Jacobite, nor Hanoverian; it was not overlapped with the ribbons either of Pitt or of Fox; it sought to be free and it was free; it brought to the consideration of all public questions a perfectly independent judgment. Neither Court nor aristocracy, nor the traditions of the Fourth Estate, nor of the literature of the hour had any conventional terrors for it. They all were pitched into the triple-heated crucible of matter-of-fact and common sense, and in what shape they might emerge was their look out. George Wilson always kept in view the stern fact that we have all to live our lives, and that this would have to be done whether the Kirk and State had gang'd the gait indicated in the verse of Burns, or turned in the reverse direction. To husband for use at the right time all the resources of the individual, mental, moral, and physical was his simple political faith. His religious faith was expressed in a life of constant labour for others and constant abnegation of self.

THE ROMANCE OF THE WAR.

THE war now raging in France is especially fruitful in surprises. The ancient, the mediæval, and the modern are blended amongst the resources of both sides, in a manner quite startling to the reflective mind. Omitting any reference to the surprises of Saarbruck, Weissembourg, Wörth, and Sedan, some incidents arising from the investment of Paris are very curious. Paris invested, means the cutting off of all ordinary means of communication between that city and the world outside the line of the besieging army. The resources of the besieged in trying to communicate with the outer world, and of the besiegers in trying to prevent such communications, are very interesting to the onlookers. The practice of ballooning was never carried on with such serious intent, and with such momentous issues at stake, as those with which it is now almost daily used from Paris; and the spectacle of M. Gambetta escaping by that means from the capital, affords the first instance in history of a statesman going up in a ballon for the good of his country! The balloons from Paris are the means of conveying pigeons from the city, whose duty is to bring back from the outside messages to the capital. The pigeon is the oldest messenger on record, as it was sent out by Noah from the Ark, to bring word as to the state of the earth during the subsistence of the great flood. The recorded history of perhaps every nation mentions the use of pigeons as messengers. But to-day one of the youngest of modern inventions, that of microscopic photography, is used as the means of conveying news by the oldest of messengers. Each pigeon entering Paris carries on the middle feather of its tail, in a space of one inch and a half in length, by about three-sixteenths of an inch in diameter, the enormous number of three thousand five hundred messages, of twenty words each, or the grand total of seventy thousand words! The Germans, to intercept this communication by the most ancient messenger, and the most modern means of minute writing, bring in a mediæval sport—that of hawking. Lately an ingenious Frenchman has invented and patented an entirely new means of communication, by which the conveyance of letters, sealed as written, is undertaken for the small charge of one franc per letter—a saving of seven hundred per cent on the cost of the pigeon-post. The means by which this is undertaken is not made public, lest German ingenuity should find a means of stopping it.

Another remarkable development of the necessities of the Parisians is now to be seen daily in the second advertising column of the *Times* newspaper. For several days that column and part of the third have been full of advertisements, in French, conveying news from the emigrés in England and America, and from friends dispersed over the continent, to some of the beleaguered citizens of Paris. The fact that messages from such places as Boulogne, Havre, Pau, Grenoble, Bordeaux, Lausanne, Brussels, and the Hague, are put into the *Times* seems to point to the conclusion, that the Thunderer regularly reaches Paris. The nature of the news thus conveyed to Paris is very various—births, deaths, sickness, recovery, financial and shipping information, addresses of escaped wives, children, or parents, and assurances of good health, good wishes, and prayers of those outside the German lines, form the substance of the bulk of these advertisements. A translation of a few of these advertisements will serve our present purpose, which is only to call the attention of our readers to the strange romance to be daily found in our contemporary. We purposely omit names and addresses.

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pipe with a client in the commercial room, or I stayed with the client, after taking his order, after business hours, to a bit of supper and a chat over the news of the day."

"You must have seen a good deal of hard weather," we remarked, "for you could have had no protection beyond an occasional shelter." "As to the weather, I never took any notice of it. It's very foolish to complain of the weather when you can't alter it. I wore my great coat against rain and snow; it was snow that bothered me most. I always got off and walked my horse, if it was the whole of a stage. You see the snow balled in the horse's foot, and if allowed to continue it became a hard lump, so I had to stop every now and then to pick it out." "But how about the rain?" "Well, of course, I've had many a good wetting, but I never took cold. I was generally warm with riding, and when I got in I never went near the fire, but went walking and stamping about in the room or somewhere under cover out of a draught, sipped a glass of neat brandy and then changed my clothes, but I often found that by that time I was dry again." "We remember to have seen you," we observed, "several times lately without an overcoat. How is it you don't wear one?" "I never wore one in my life," was our friend's startling reply, "except a great coat on my journeys. I go out for a bit of a walk every day, and never feel to want one. I am not quite as strong on my pins as I used to be, and can't get very far; but I like to get about when I can." "You spoke just now as having been known for regularity in the road," we reminded him. "Yes, I soon found that my customers were glad to know when to expect me, without being reminded beforehand of my coming, and many of them occasionally wrote out my order for me ready. I was known at the inns, too, to be punctual, and have often had a bit of dinner which I have ordered, by way of a joke three months beforehand, and more than once have had odds bet on my coming into a town within ten minutes of a certain hour three months afterwards, which, though ignorant of the wager, I have enabled my backer to win."

"You'd have some good living, we suppose, at the inns, and always have a sharp appetite for it from exercise in the fresh country air?" we suggested. "I always put up at a good commercial house, and lived as plain as I could; but I had generally a very poor appetite when out, compared with when I was at home, and I should often have eaten next to nothing if it hadn't been for the pint of sherry that it was the custom to take at dinner. Having a horse, I was, according to rule, charged nothing for my bed, but that rule has died out, I suppose; for when I retired, I was, if not the oldest traveller on the road, the very last, I think, that travelled on horseback with saddlebags."

"And don't you miss horse exercise?" we inquired. "No; I never liked it, though I had the best part of thirty-four years at it, and I have never crossed a horse since I gave up travelling—I prefer walking. I don't think I have been in a cab or an omnibus twenty times for the last thirty years. It isn't many years since I walked to Bowdon and back in a day." "By the way, are you quite sure you have escaped scot-free? Your right arm does not seem very serviceable. Excuse our making the remark," we added. "Oh, this was not done in my travelling days. One night just before Christmas, two years since, I was crossing a street in town, and was knocked down and driven over by a Hansom cab. The gentleman inside got out and put me inside, and the cabman drove me home and helped me into the house, and while our people were examining what injuries I had sustained, the cabman walked out quietly, drove off, and I have not seen him since. My shoulder was injured, and I cannot raise my elbow from my side, but I can use my right hand enough to hold my knife and cut my meat at table, and hold my walking-stick when I go out as I do every day."

From further inquiry we find our venerable friend has always insisted on as much outdoor exercise as can be got, and regularity in meals and rest. He enjoys his glass of beer at dinner and supper, and smokes two pipes every night of his life. May we wish him, with all our other readers, a happy New Year?

OUR FOURTH VOLUME.

The present number commences the fourth volume of the *Sphinx*. The series of papers on Lancashire Worthies will be continued, and a series on the Learned Societies of Manchester, embracing the Statistical, the Literary and Philosophical, the Medical, and others will be commenced. A Title-page and Index are in preparation, and will be ready for delivery in the course of a fortnight or three weeks.

TOWN TALK,
AND THINGS IN GENERAL.

A SHORT CUT TO MARRIAGE.

WE fear that a recent event, of the sort which it is usual to term auspicious, will add an alarming reinforcement to the ranks of women in search of their rights. The *Observer* has reason to believe that almost simultaneously with the acceptance by Miss Garrett, M.D. of a seat at the London School Board, that lady accepted the presidency of a board of a more domestic character, belonging to a gentleman who had taken a great interest in her election. To this complexion must they come at last—that is, some of them—whatever their complexion may be at first: and there must be something very melancholy to the more rabid of the injured sex's champions in the consideration. We dread to contemplate the consequences of this undignified proceeding on the part of Miss Garrett. We were in hopes that the ladies would be deterred from the masculine behaviour of some of their sisters by observing that so to do was to incur the distaste and avoidance of those tyrannical men whom most of them prefer to be upon good terms with, after all. But if the adoption of a masculine mode of life is to be the road to marriage, what is to become of us?

THOSE NAUGHTY LITTLE BOYS!

A great many good people appear to be much exercized in their minds, because the little boys will persist in making slides upon the footpaths. They quote with glee a recent case where a little boy was fined no end of pocket money for so doing, and they evidently desire Sir Joseph to fulminate another of his memorable notices—in the form of his celebrated proclamation as to orange-peel—to the mental and moral terror of these naughty young persons. They might as well bay the moon. To make slides on footpaths is part of little boy human nature, and little boys will continue to do it while footpaths and frosts are.

"THE LOVES OF THE WRENS."

It is really refreshing to note how many of the papers have appreciated the last publication of the Poet Laureate at its proper price, and have emphatically told Mr. Tennyson that he ought to be ashamed of bringing such disgrace on English literature as he does by such publications. Since the laureate "stood on a tower in the wet," his position at the head of English poetry has been unstable. His last piece of nursery nonsense would seem to be an abdication of the standing which it is proof positive he is not fit to occupy. More arrant rubbish than *The Loves of the Wrens* was never dignified, or rather satirized, by the assumption of the name of poetry. By the side of it the feeblest of modern burlesques rises into the majesty of a work of art. To write a rubbishy extravaganza does require a certain amount of cleverness, but to produce such a work as the Laureate's last requires nothing but pen, ink, and paper, and a doddering state of intellect. If any twenty fairly educated children were set to write a nursery rhyme, the worst result could hardly help being better than the latest publication of the man who wears the crown of English poetry. That such a rhyme without reason or rhythm should go forth into the world from such a source, is a national humiliation.

THE WAGES OF SUCCESS.

We often hear vague rumours of the monstrous terms commanded by successful singers, actors, and others; but it is seldom that we get a plain confession of their earnings from their own lips. In the following letter to a London agent, published by the *Melbourne Argus*, Mr. Sothern states his gains at £50 a night, or £15,000 a year. In reply to the proposal of a visit to Melbourne, Mr. Sothern says:—"In the first place, I should lose a good sixteen weeks in the passages to and fro. That loss of time means to me a loss of £4,800—call it even £4,000. That amount has to be considered when making an engagement, for I leave a certainty here to run the risk of an undoubted uncertainty there. The public has nothing to do with this, you'll say, but I have; and as mine is the risk, so am I naturally anxious to lessen that risk as much as possible—ergo, unless I see my way to a probability of making three times as much in Australia as I can do in England, I should be unwise

in leaving home." In plain English, Mr. Sothern will condescend to visit Melbourne for the trifling honorarium of £150 a night. How any man of ordinary human modesty could for very shame ask £150 for one such very mediocre entertainment as Mr. Sothern has to give is more than we can realize. For what reason, in the name of wonder, does Mr. Buckstone go on paying Mr. Sothern £50 a night for acting at the Haymarket, when, during both the last two tours of Mr. Sothern through the provinces, the Haymarket has, in his absence, done such business that, on both occasions—both last year and this—his return to it has been postponed?

THE WATCH COMMITTEE AND THE JUSTICES.

A little while ago the Salford Watch Committee got into hot water for riddling the cases *before* they went into the police court, and now the Manchester committee gets into still hotter water for riddling a case after its passage through the court. The city justices—if their attendance is no better than it used to be—appear to be unwilling either to attend to their business themselves or to let anybody else attend to it for them. This time at least, the Watch Committee do appear to have transgressed the bounds of propriety. Not content with fining their own servant for instituting without leave a prosecution, they seem to have taken upon themselves to refund the fine imposed upon two prosecuted parties by the magistrates. This is undoubtedly a flagrant contempt of the police court, which, if pardonable in a private person (as Mr. Bennett argues) is at any rate reprehensible in a public body. The Watch Committee would do well to re-consider this portion of their late proceeding.

THE "LADY LEAVING MANCHESTER."

Our old friend, the "lady leaving Manchester," has once more returned to her quarters in Higher Broughton; and the piano, "very little used," which she has so long been desirous of selling, is again offered to an enterprizing but, we fear, unenlightened public. As before, "twenty-seven guineas will be taken, worth sixty."

LAWYERS AND TESTATORS.

A correspondent confirms the account we gave last week of the fate of Miss Atherton's bequest to Holy Trinity Church of £1,000, and informs us that she made a similar bequest to St. Matthew's Church, Campfield (the Rev. Canon Bently's). This legacy also, it is believed, will not effect the benevolent purpose of the testatrix, and for the same reason. We hear further, that the curate appointed to Holy Trinity some short time ago either has left, or is about to leave, the resources of the church not being sufficient to warrant the payment of the stipend which Miss Atherton, by her bequest, intended in some measure to provide. Moral—Don't put *all* your trust in lawyers.

THE QUONDAM CHORISTER OF ST. ALBAN'S.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SPHINX.

Sir,—Will you allow a Real Chorister to give some information respecting the Quondam Chorister, which will prove that you are not in error when you stated that the practices he complained of to the Bishop were those in "the use of which he had aforetime delighted." Instead of Quondam Chorister objecting to lighted candles, acrobatism, and popery, he has encouraged them. When the candles were lighted during the celebration he lighted them. No member of St. Alban's had more Romeward learnings than he had. He was the means of one member joining St. Chad's. The Quondam Chorister is better known as Brother Wilfred, sub-prior of the Third order of St. Benedict, under the noted Father Ignatius. He spent a week at the Norwich Monastery, paraded the streets and attended the Church of St. Laurence of that city in monk's dress. He assisted at a Popish service for the dead, and also performed Popish services at a house in Ancoats, using among many other Romish prayers, the following:—"May the Holy Mother of God pray for us." As regards his "taking action purely and simply to save St. Alban's from the hands of those who would make it a feeder to St. Chad's," he took a member of St. Alban's to the Roman monastery at Gorton, and afterwards to a mission at St. Chad's, under Father Suffield, which led to that member and his family leaving the Church of England and joining the Church of Rome, which they would not have done but for the Quondam Chorister. He also assisted at the services held in the Corn Exchange by Father Ignatius, and wore a monk's dress, cotta, and rosary. He has also given Popish rosaries to several members of St. Alban's. It is untrue that he was in possession of the document when the two curates came. He did not have it for some time afterwards, and then it was only given by the Rev. J. E. Sedgwick as an authority over the lay workers connected with the Guild of St. Alban the Martyr, Manchester. As regards his returning when the curates are gone, that is impossible. He will never be allowed to do any more church work in connection with St. Alban's. I think the majority of your readers will agree with me that it is a great blessing for St. Alban's that it is purged of one who has done all these Romish and corrupt practices.—Yours faithfully, A REAL CHORISTER.

Manchester, January 4th, 1871.

A PANTOMIME FROM A NEW POINT OF VIEW.

BY AN OLD BOY.

I'VE been to the Pantomime. I tell this with a modified kind of a smile, or as an ordinary piece of information, just according to what I deem the humour of the person to whom I impart the interesting fact, and I meet with two general kinds of answers. Those who have already arranged or promised to go, want to know, not if I was pleased or the like, but if it was good, worth going to, and so on. The other kind is briefly comprehended in this—"More fool you!" It certainly is not worth while to argue with what I may term the crustaceous order upon that chapter in the whole duty of man which treats of the obligation and necessity of going to see pantomimes; but to those who did affect some kind of interest in the matter I enlarged upon the exceeding satisfactoriness of the matter; that I had seen the first performance of it—a thing necessarily impossible for them to do—but of course somebody must be first, or in the first lot, and of such I had been.

"It seems wonderful how things are managed to happen at the only moment suitable for them to happen," said a thoughtful friend, whom we were cautiously endeavouring to enlist in the ranks of pantomine spectators. The Princess has no sooner uttered her first sigh for some lover, hitherto unknown or deemed impossible, than you have become aware of distant strains of barbaric music, and in the course of a long procession, a Prince appears, to demand, with a happy disregard of all our conventional ceremonies, the hand of the fair Being whose affections he had so mysteriously engaged."

"Precisely so," I rejoined, "just the very thing I have thought of myself. The clown no sooner appears on the scene than a string of sausages or some trifle of that kind is presented to his view, in such an irresistible light that to steal them is merely to fulfil one of the laws of his own existence." "Yes," answered my philosophic friend, musingly, "they do say that it is opportunity that makes the thief." "But then," cried I, "who makes the sausages?" Here, I am sorry to say, my friend became slightly incoherent, his remarks consisting chiefly of several well-known expressions of an objurgatory nature, which in the interests of public morality are not given.

The same idea reverted again and again to my mind—how is it that everything seems to be there when it's wanted, and all to fit in in such a wonderful manner—and I came to the conclusion that nothing would satisfy me until I had seen how they play a pantomime. I accordingly betook myself to a friend, who appeared to have certain mysterious relations with the Prince's Theatre—for it was the Prince's pantomime that I had seen—and stated my wants. "Ho! want to go behind the scenes, do you? Not allowed," was his somewhat curt and discouraging reply. "Well, not exactly that," I replied; "at least, not in the way you put it. That's a sort of thing which I know, from novels in the *London Journal* and elsewhere, is the common pastime of noble lords and baronets and 'scions of the aristocracy,' whoever *they* are. There must be a vast deal to do in getting things ready, and having them there when they're wanted, for I know how difficult it is in acting charades." "Oh, bother charades!" said he; "I see what you want. I'm going to the theatre now; so come along. You had better see it by daylight first. I can take you in now, and I'll see if I can arrange for you to

come to-night, if you like. I shall be there all the time, and," he kindly added, "I can show you round."

A swing-door at the back of the Theatre, its real working front-door, however, admitted us to a dark and grimy lodge like that of a manufactory, beyond which the uninitiated are not permitted to pass, but we unchecked went up a small staircase which brought us directly on to the stage. The green curtain being down, "the house" was invisible, but on the stage all was life. The floor of the stage is not so much a floor as a series of trap-doors, square, and round, and longitudinal. At the back was the scenery for the great waterfall, and at each side were sets of side-scenes or wings, four or five together, standing edge on to the stage, while overhead you could just see the edges of sheets of scenery as broad as the stage is wide. In the middle of the stage a large fan-shaped piece of scenery had been brought up from below, and men were repairing it and touching it up, for these things are, in consequence of the hard usage they undergo, constantly in process of renovation. But how differently all these things looked in the light—twilight at the best—of a December afternoon. They all looked like bad copies of the bright scenes on which we had gazed, "on the feast of Stephen," from the second row in the dress circle—dirty copies which had been seized for rent and sent off to an auctioneer's warehouse—beg pardon, gallery—for sale. I gazed about, the prey of various kinds of wonderment, particularly at the size of things, the width and depth, from the front, of the stage, and especially the height. Indeed, the stage half of the house seemed to be the larger of the two.

But as in a dream we find ourselves suddenly away from, without having left, some scene, and at once in some other, so now I was descending some narrow stairs in partial darkness without any particular misgiving, only a conviction that my fate might be now considered as settled beyond recall. Entering a low-roofed apartment, I saw things which I had seen in the flesh, and had no thought to see again. Here were crowns I had seen worn by royalty; the corpse of the pig which hangs up by the pork-butcher's shop in the second scene in the Clowniad, with the silvered casque of the dragoon—he of the spurs—who becomes the unlawful prize of the clown. Further on was the British workman, wearing the apron and paper cap of his order, engaged at a bench at some undertakerish looking work. He scarcely looked up when we went near to see what he was engaged in. But what *do* you think he was doing? You'll never guess. He was mending a blackbird! This said my guide, is the property-room, and that's the property-man. Proputty, proputty, thought I; the shade of the Lincolnshire Farmer may be.

Turning my head round I was in a jungle, a dense tropical forest as it appeared at first. I was, in fact, under the stage, among the pillars and posts of every thickness, with wooden hoisting wheels like huge sunflowers, and hempen ropes trailing about in every direction like creepers. This is the very bottom of all, and I am standing on the solid rock, clay at all events. I am next conscious of winding my way for about quarter of an hour up a spiral staircase, like going up the monument and smiling at the grief other people are in, but we emerge into such daylight as there is on a narrow passage or gallery called the "flies," with the wall on one hand, and a light hand-rail intervening a precipice on the other. Looking cautiously over, I see the stage apparently about a hundred feet below. I observe workmen moving the tall pieces of side-scenery, the tops of which, the wings, are far below me. I gather, therefore, I am higher than the flight of any blackbird. Passing through a doorway, I am at once in a kind of gallery. This is the painting room, the work place of the scenic artists; a long and very lofty room, with an immense frame-work reaching in one piece all along each side. This is raised or lowered as required by a windlass at one end of the room, working wheels and shafting, all wooden again, and rope-gearing near the roof. On these frames are stretched the huge canvases on which are painted the drops and wing scenery. The floor is here also slightly treacherous. It ceases altogether for about half a yard from the wall on each side, and it is, or rather can be, opened up across the middle to let the Brobdignagian pictures through. Behind an improvised screen was a large blazing fire. A table and two chairs, an odd tea-cup or two, and a slightly damaged picture graced the scene. As that was the only place in the house where smoking was allowed, it was felt necessary to take out our pipes and share what few "corns" of baccy we could muster amongst us, and arrangements were made for my visit in the evening.

If there had been any trembling moon glimmering about, soon after six that evening, it would have seen this adventurous voyager floating over the surge of the Oxford Road tide eastwards till the swing-door yielded to his hand, and he became co-tenant with the courteous but grimy warden of a grimy cell. The third person, however, becomes ridiculous when there is no third person present; so I resume my thrilling narrative by saying that I was piloted about by a friendly sub. or a super or some such preposition, for some yards between five and five hundred as near as I can tell, and presently the archangel, who conducted me, said, "I have only one piece of advice to give you. As soon as the pantomine begins, everybody will be strung to the utmost pitch and highest tension for what they have to do. Every man has a certain thing to do, at one particular time, and not a second sooner or later, and he has his own particular man to look at and watch for the signal to do it, and afterwards, as one may say, to undo it or do it back again. If he has to let go a rope in his hand at a particular moment, and has done so, he has, at another signal, to haul it up again; so if you speak to any of them he'll probably miss his tip, besides being reported by his foreman or superintendent or what they call them, for carelessness or breach of rules and fined. One thing further, we'll go about to every part, and whenever you see a man coming in your direction get out of his road at once, or if you can't do that, squash yourself as close as you can against the wall."

Now, from the floor of the stage to any point above it which you can see from the audience part, is one distance, and that is less than half the distance from that point to the top of the house. The large scenes, such as "The Corridor," scene 3, are slung high up in the roof, the lower edge just coming to the level of the flies. They are hung with counterpoise weights, which balance them equally, and so, to pull them down is only to haul down the tackling by which they are suspended. For this purpose the tackling men are stationed on the gallery to the left of the stage as you look at it from the house, the O. P., or Opposite Prompter side, and this being so, we crossed a bridge, about a yard wide, behind the painting over the Proscenium of Shakespeare and the characters of his creating, and took up a position just above the second right-hand entrance to the stage.

Presently the overture began, and all the characters of the piece, from King Krustibilius the Fourteenth to the juniorist fairy, assembled on the inside front of the curtain, and, at the close of the overture, sang in chorus the legend of the blackbirds, and so singing, slowly melted away as Jupiter climbed into his four-poster, and began his Hullo! But it was all done without any trepidation as of an approaching catastrophe. The fair mousquetaires strutted about, giving themselves airs; that pretty and "owdacious" little creature, Folly, danced and fluttered about in unrestrainable glee; and the whole party seemed fully bent on playing high jinks for the rest of the evening.

The author has wisely judged in taking our sympathies by storm in the opening scene. No better was ever devised for an introduction to other events equally, but from different reasons, impossible. Shall I say how the thunderbolt arrives? On second thoughts, no. Let everybody keep a good watch, and try and find it out. The conjurer said of his trick, it's very easy when you know it. So is this; wherefore, etcetera. And so exit Mars, Bacchus, Apollo, virorum, and the womankind, too, except that Minerva, the epicene, remains as stage-manager, and orders folks and things about with an energy worthy of a lady member of a school board.

As it is not within the limits of the present article to criticize the pantomime as a play, we can only say that, from what we saw, the playing of such a piece is chiefly a matter of long-continued drilling—practice, practice, practice, and nothing else. Hordes of workmen appeared to be banging scenery about and trying to bring things generally to immortal smash, when, just at the last moment, a turn of the elbow converted the confusion into a fresh and completely constructed scene. Half-a-dozen fairies and other attachés of the ballet department seemed dreadfully in the way, but the next scene, instead of falling and crushing them, merely moved and disclosed them gathered in a dainty group. Even the pretty volunteers, so far from making any undue intrusion, arrived at the very identical moment for their appearance. All this was the most wonderful part of the business. It is a mere matter of £ s. d. to get any quantity of persons and materials

together, but the "craddy" is to get the persons to do the right thing at the moment when it is wanted. Somehow this was done, and everything went merry as a marriage bell. How these different bands of people, whether workmen, fairies, mousquetaires, deities, or what, contrive to be on the scene is a secret only second to what they do with themselves in the meantime, when they are not visible on or about the stage. The ladies disappear by magic after the scene is over, and again do not so much come or arrive, as that they are there when required. Evidently, a pantomime couldn't be played without the most perfect arrangement; and of the properties the same is to be said. All the things are being constantly brought up one set of stairs, as wanted, and, when done with, taken back by another, and put in their proper place for the next performance.

My cicerone conducted me again to the infernal regions to see the descent of Prince Darling and the ascent into the basket of the Dook. This is, of course, a very simple business, and as it is so much more easily imagined than described, I shall merely refer the reader to his imagination. The chief characteristic of the Harlequinade, or, inventing a term from the principal performer, the Clowniad, is the immense physical force and energy thrown into the performance. The Clown, one of the best I ever saw, is on the strain throughout, and how he manages to keep breath enough to give the few words which, in defiance of stage traditions, he does utter, is a mystery. Last scene of all, the Vapour Witches, is one of the funniest I ever saw in a pantomime—from the front, that is. Whether it is as funny behind the curtain, and how the immense shadows are managed I can say no more than that it, and they, and all the rest of the arrangements are, as the bills will inform you, "under the management of Mr. Charles Calvert."

CURLING.

AS SEEN BY A SOUTH SAXON.

FINDING ourselves on the Monday afternoon of last week in the unwonted predicament of having two or three hours to dispose of as it might please us best, we put a question to ourselves very much like the one asked by my Lord Tomnoddy of Tiger Tim, "What may a *plebeian* find to do?" As we had asked it of ourselves the most reasonable thing in the world was to answer it ourselves which we did mentally in this wise: "Get into a 'bus, old man, and take a pipe-opener on a good road, at the rate of about five miles an hour!" We were near the Exchange, and a Standrigg immediately presented itself, so we made ourselves responsible for the use of three-pennyworth of it at once. Old Trafford bar was its intended destination, but it was discovered by our careful driver, so soon as our careful guard had collected the fares in Stretford Road, that the road was too slippery for the horses to travel any farther. You see, reader, the fog was not so dense here as it had been farther in townwards, and the driver could get a better sight of his horses. Having alighted with the rest of the passengers, a walk of about three-quarters of a mile brought us to Old Trafford bar—one of the relics of a barbarous age—and passing through it, went on our way admiring, or otherwise, the snug or smug-looking villas which line the road hereabout. We would rather dwell in one of those two old-fashioned, rough-cast, homely-looking houses on the left, however, than any of their stuck-up neighbours, after all.

Was it the homely look of these old houses that made us think of our old home far away in Surrey? Was it thinking of that home set us thinking of the happy Christmas spent there? Was it thinking of Christmas pastimes that set us thinking of conundrums? Whatever brought it about we know that an old conundrum *did* present itself One that we picked up whilst playing at marbles in the shadow of Buckingham Palace. Well, we don't care to say how many years it is ago. We will just say, however, that in those happy days we used to frequently see a slim young girl with weak and overhanging ancles, playing hoop with a lad about her own age, who afterwards had the misfortune to become blind; that that slim young girl (whom God preserve) has now sat upon the throne of England for nearly thirty-four years, and that that young lad is now known as the ex-king of Hanover! It's a long time ago, but we hav'nt forgot the conundrum, so we will e'en out with it, "Why is Buckingham Palace the cheapest house in England? Because it was built for one sovereign and furnished for another!" But here we are opposite "The Alderman's Nest." Surely it could not be *that* which brought our old conundrum to the front, after all the years that have fled to the past since we first heard it? In a thorn tree on the lawn of the Blind Asylum, nearly opposite the "Nest," we espied a pair of blackbirds pitching into the haws with an aldermanic appetite. It was at this point of our journey that we learned from a friend whom we met that a curling match was then going on in the fields beyond the Dog and Partridge. We called at this hostelry—(well, why not? Was not our old friend, Dr. Dalton, in the habit of calling, and even tarrying awhile here?)—just to enquire where the curling was being performed. About half-a-mile beyond this "public," a beaten path through the snow led us across some very rough fields which had evidently once been arable; now, they were, with their ridges to fall over, and their furrows to fall into, simply horrible.

But here is the ice, and here are the curlers. Now we had never seen any curling. Could'nt imagine what it was like. Certainly we did not think it had any affinity with the sort of curling performed by Professor Phenix! Still the word seemed to suggest something which should have at least a touch of the circumrotary about it; but it has nothing of the kind. There is no more "curling" in connection with it, than there is in connection with cricket or football—taking the dictionary meaning of the word. We reached the spot just too late to hear the ringing cheers which had greeted Sir Humphrey de Trafford's presence on the ice. Sir Humphrey, we learned, is a patron of the club. Play was for some purpose suspended when we arrived, and what first met our eye were several groups of gentlemen, numbering in the whole probably a hundred and fifty, and three distinct lots of what appeared to us to be so many tea kettles without spouts. Being recognised, we were kindly invited, in a good Scotch accent, to cross the rails. We did so, and soon three parties began to play. The kettles we found were lumps of solid granite, weighing, we should guess, between twenty and thirty pounds, and were in fact the "stanes." They have handles affixed to the top to cast them by, and some of these handles were highly and expensively ornamented with inlaid metals. A circle is cut in the ice about four feet in diameter, in the centre of which a penny piece is sunk level with the surface of the ice, and this is called a "rink." There were six rinks in all, so that a curling club must have some capital to start with. The rinks seemed to be about twenty-six yards from each other, and the "stanes" are cast, or slid, from one rink to the other, the great art being to give the "stane" just impetus enough to bring it up to the rink opposite. At each end, some feet from the rink, a scratch is made across the track, and a "stane" becoming stationary before crossing this mark is at once removed, and is dead for that end, that being called a "hog." The players are provided with a number of brushes, and if a "stane" shows symptoms of dying away before reaching the rink, these brushes are industriously used by the player's confederates in clearing away any particles of snow in front which might obstruct its progress. Like bowls, a good cast is often purposely knocked out by an adversary, and therefore a player will leave his "stane" short, as at bowls, to protect the good cast of his partner. The absurd practice of old bowlers running after their bowls, and talking to them, balancing their bodies on one foot, and screwing their mugs as if they were suddenly affected with paralysis on one side, in the hopeless endeavour to influence the course of their "woods," is, we are happy to record, not seen amongst curlers.

The excitement consequent upon the changes of the game by good casts, knocking out, and so forth, is quite as great amongst curlers as bowlers; indeed we must give the palm to the Scots. A winning cast not only elicited loud shouts, but sent hats, bonnets, and brushes into the air. At times there was a good deal of shouting; such phrases as, "Well put down! Well laid down! Gently. Bring him up. Bring him up. Thank ye for that, Misther Black." "Go on Mac. Garred him. Garred him. I'll no care if ye do a hog." Brush, brush, bring him up. Gently. Oh! man, oh! man! but that is great for ye." Sometimes, when one side lay two or three in, and were not sufficiently guarded, the last player on the opposite side would send his "stane" with considerable force, and with such precision as to knock his adversaries all out of the rink, and leave one or two of his own partners in. The shout that went up into the bleak air when such was the case was terrific. We came away with the conviction that we had seen an

amusing winter out-of-door game; that we had seen as good a sample of muscular Christians as could well be got together, and we were pleased with what we had seen.

DICK WHITTINGTON AND HIS CAT.

THE pantomimes at the Theatre Royal, like the issue of blood-bolter'd Banquo, are interminable, and the line promises to "stretch out to the crack of doom." Twenty-five years ago last October the Theatrewas opened, and since that time, twenty-six Christmas pantomimes have been produced, every one of which we have seen, from Guy Fawkes the first, to Richard Whittington the second; for Dick and his famous cat had a triumphant career on the same boards a few years ago. Some matter-of-fact historians admit that there was such a person as Sir Richard Whittington, who was Lord-Mayor of London in the reign of Henry the Fifth. They also allege that the famous chief-magistrate of the metropolis was a man of gentle birth, but they ignore all mention of the bells, the milestone, and the cat. Now, although this is an age of free enquiry, of school boards, and of general topsy-turvyism, we are not going to be put down in this way; and we go in for the whole hog, Dick, the cat, and the bells, and thrice Mayor of London. Why not thrice Mayor? Has not Alderman Sir James Duke, Bart., been twice Lord Mayor, and has he not told us repeatedly that he came to the city without a sixpence in his pocket? In fact, coming without a sixpence in the pocket seems to be rather a recommendation for a Lord Mayor than otherwise.

Twenty-six pantomines at the Theatre Royal have we seen, that is, as Bishop Colenso would calculate, equal to about seventy-eight hours devoted to the contemplation of these mysteries. Seventy-eight hours! Over three days and three nights. Why that beats Jonah in the whale's belly; but we suppose we shall be told to disbelive that passage of history next. As we cast our eyes back upon the twenty-six pantomines, not to mention numerous extravaganzas besides, into what a wonderful fairy-land are we hurried! What a host of fays and fairies, magicians, demons, motley clowns, spangled harlequins, slippered pantaloons, and dazzling columbines appear before us! Davidge, as Ali Baba the woodcutter, perched like 'possum up a gum tree; W. H. Payne as Robinson Crusoe and Baron Munchausen; the lovely Misses Leclercq; sweet Anne Page—no, Payne (that estimable lady will excuse the slip); Signor Boleno, Flexmore, and Weston, clowns; old Bob Cousens, the pantaloon; Worboys as Puss in Boots; *Don Leander; The Invisible Prince; Xquisitelittlepet*, and *The Fair One with the Golden Locks*; F. Loyd, Everill, and Harry Thompson, convulsing audiences as Humphrey with the flail, Squire Chevy, and Dorothy Draggletail, with such excellent fooling as would have delighted old Sir Toby Belch himself; little Righton's quaint dancing and antics; the charms of Mrs. Bickerstaff (late Miss Fife) as Queen of the Fairies, Mrs. J. Wood as little Red Riding Hood, and Miss Nelly Moore (R.I.P.) as Jack. Well-a-day! These days will never return; but a truce to such maunderings and vain regrets, and let us to business. Like Macbeth, let's screw our courage to the sticking place, and t'were well it were done quickly.

Dick Whittington and his Cat, the pantomime now running at the Theatre Royal, if not equal to some of its predecessors, such as *The House that Jack Built*, *Sinbad the Sailor*, *Red Riding Hood*, and others, is a fair average production on the whole. The scenery is superb; no expense has been spared, and the whole extent of the capacious stage is in constant requisition. We shall spare our readers any analysis of the plot. Suffice it to say that the outlines of the story are adhered to, and for necessary exigencies, the plots of a malignant necromancer and a deformed yellow dwarf are interwoven with the adventures of Dick and his cat. The pantomime is a succession of gorgeous scenes, and the dresses are very brilliant. Specially notable are the Watteau scene, with the dance of fairy shepherds and shepherdesses, the lord-mayor's show, the banquet, the transformations, and the deck of a man-of-war, manned by two hundred sailors and marines. Several scenes from Offenbach's *Barbe Bleu* are introduced, in which, however, the dancing is better than the singing. No part in the performance calls for special comment excepting the cat, which is a wonder. Chambers's Journal—not the Edinburgh print, but the Theatre Royal *Observer*, published by Mr. Chambers of that ilk—asserts that the cat is only six years of age. We should think that he is nearer six hundred, and if we believed in the transmigration of souls we should say that the spirit of Dick Whittington's cat has entered the body of the tiny performer in question. His kittenish propensities are wonderful, and his performance on the tripeee a sight to behold. Miss D'Este makes a dapper little Dick, and certainly her shapely and sturdy legs would have carried their owner beyond the fourth milestone without fatigue, had the bells not enticed him back. Mr. Dampier, as the Yellow Dwarf, gives some amusing imitations of Fechter and Bandmann, but the great scene between him and the princess, which ought to be a travestie of the wooing scene in *Richard Third*, misses fire. Miss Jenny Taylor, however, plays with much spirit, and Miss Zerbini sings pleasantly, and is a very agreeable young "Dick's Darling." In the course of the harlequinade a pretty girl appears on the stage, in a well-known striped dress, familiar to us in the photographic shop-windows. The audience at once recognises the P——ss L——e. The band strikes up "The Campbells are Coming," and forthwith enters a noble youth in the tartan of his clan, who carries off the princess in triumph. This episode severely exercises the minds of the dames and demoiselles in the pit, and evokes many sighs and ejaculations. "Eh, deary me, and is that the Markis? Well, Mary Hann, did you ever? No Sarah Jane, I never," and such like. Miss Fanny Brown is a very pretty and graceful columbine.

THE WEATHER AND THE ROADS.

OH, yes, you know, this is "delightful weather"—"most enjoyable"—and every thing of that sort: but a little of it goes a long way. When one's friends come slithering up to one with red-tipped noses, blue lips, and a general development of goose-flesh, and through chattering teeth endeavour feebly to enunciate the formula "nice seasonable weather, isn't it?"—when one has to wash one's self in fragments of ice—when one's food freezes on the way from one's plate to one's mouth—when the gas becomes afflicted with a severe attack of St. Vitus's dance—and when the water-pipe goes off with a bang in exactly the middle of the night, and one has to turn out of one's tepid bed to fetch an indignant plumber—when all these misfortunes come in combination—when upon horror's head horrors accumulate in the recent goose-fleshed and cold-blooded manner—it is time that the rules regulating the strength of expressions permissible in polite society were relaxed.

The sort of weather we have lately had reminds one forcibly of the description given by Dickens of a certain very wretched journey suffered by Tom Pinch, which Mr. Dickens endeavours, by dint of a large amount of literary puffing and blowing, to persuade the reader was a very jolly out indeed. In the general behaviour of mankind during the last few days we have observed a great deal of that doleful pretence of being jolly under circumstances that put jollity out of the question, which is so conspicuous in the writings—and especially the Christmas writings—of Charles Dickens. Now that his pen is stilled, the Christmas season will more and more cease to be regarded as that glorious period which he forced it to appear, and will more and more come to be regarded as that combination of material discomforts and laborious pleasures which it is. We might almost adapt the saying of George Cornwall Lewis, and put it, that the seasons would be tolerable if it were not for their Christmases.

But if Christmas is a laborious time for the human being, what a time is it for the beasts of burden! This horribly long frost, which is such a source of delight to the skaters, is nothing less than an appalling calamity to the unhappy brutes entrusted to the guardianship of man. Our roads have been for many days in such a state that it may almost be said that they could not possibly be worse; and still the horses, always overtaxed, which draw our public vehicles, are yoked to the same loads, and worked for the same lengths of time as ever, if not for longer periods. To the few people in the world who have any capability of realising what is endured by the brute creation, such times as these are simply prolonged periods of misery and torture. We do not know which is the more abominable, the grasping avarice of our omnibus proprietors or the callous selfishness of our omnibus passengers. It may be that certain locomotive accommodation ought to be afforded, since it certainly can be without gross inhumanity; but it is assuredly a scandalous shame that precisely the same accommodation should be afforded in weather like this, with no more means than are available in ordinary times. We make our protest, as it is our custom; but without the slightest hope of doing any good. The members of the police force are so many dummies.

Is it not an extraordinary thing—and a devilish satire on the frailty of poor humanity—that the very people who argue that there will be a future existence for themselves, because one is necessary to compensate them for their undeserved sufferings in this life, should be among those who abuse the innocence of brute beasts to whom they utterly deny the compensating opportunities of a future state?

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LONDON STREET IN YE OLDEN TIME.

(C. BREW.)

YE LORD MAYOR'S SHOWE.

Trumpeters, Heralds, City Marshal, Civic Guard, Banners of the Trades' Companies, Morrice Dancers, Trades' Emblems, Knights in Armour, Gog and Magog, Figures of the Four Seasons, Pageant of Britannia and the Four Quarters of the Globe, Lord Mayor's Coach, City Dignitaries, Henchmen, Footmen, &c., &c., &c.

EASTCHEAP AGAIN.

(C. BREW.)

The Yellow Dwarf changed to a Bobby—Bobby changed to a nobby swell—The Alderman changed for the worse—Dick and Alice unchanged—Attempted exchanges defeated—All changed by the Fairy Queen.

GARDENS OF THE HESPERIDES.

Fruits and Flowers.—C. BREW.

THE DRESSING OF THE TABLES FOR

THE LORD MAYOR'S BANQUET.

(C. SMITHERS.)

TRANSFORMATION.

Harlequin—Mr. W. WAITE. Columbine—Miss FANNY BROWN. Pantaloon—Mr. W. PARKER. Sprite—M. VAN DE VELDE. Clown—Mr. NICOLS Dervish

NEW THAMES EMBANKMENT & HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

(W. TELBIN, Sen.)

Sewing machines—Clown takes an elevated view of things in general.

MUSIC SHOP AND NATIONAL SCHOOL.—(W. MUIR.)

Education for the million—A real German Defeat.

DECK OF THE "VICTORIA" MAN-OF-WAR. BRITANNIA RULES THE WAVES.

MORNING PERFORMANCES commencing at **HALF-PAST ONE** o'clock on **Saturday, January 7th, Monday 9th, Tuesday 10th, Wednesday 11th, Thursday 12th, and Saturday 14th.**

SEWING MACHINES.—THE GREATEST VARIETY OF THE BEST CLASS AT REDUCED PRICES.
SEWING SILKS, THREADS, COTTON, NEEDLES, OIL, AND EVERY REQUISITE FOR SEWING MACHINES. REPAIRS PROMPTLY EXECUTED.
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